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HOWARD UNIVERSITY,

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WASHINGTON, D. C.



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ADDRESSES DELIVERED

AT THE

EIGHTEENTH ANNUAL COMMENCEMENT

OF THE

Medical Department,

INCLUDING THE

MEDICAL, DENTAL AND PHARMACEUTICAL
COLLEGES,

AT

CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH,

MARCH 9, 1887.

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1887

ADDRESS TO THE GRADUATES.

BY PROF. THOMAS B. HOOD, A. M. M. D., DEAN OF THE FACULTY.

MR. PRESIDENT, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN :

Almost precisely twenty years have now elapsed since, by act of Congress, the University represented here by the Eighteenth Annual Commencement of its Medical Department came into existence. As a rule adopted by the faculty of that Department, it becomes my duty to make the address to-night. It has occurred to me that I could not, probably, better interest the public, or serve the University and the Department, than by a hurried review of what, in the twenty years of its life, has been accomplished by this Department.

The University originated in the needs that followed upon our late war. Four millions of freed people became "the wards of the Nation." The sentiment, that to make a good and safe citizen it is essential that he be educated, applied with at least as great force to these as to all peoples. And it was in that opinion that a few gentlemen, after a meeting held in this city, petitioned Congress for a charter for a University which should, particularly, represent the colored people. The charter was granted by an act, approved by the President, March, 1867, the University taking its patronymic from the most prominent of the incorporators, that able and gallant soldier and true gentleman, General Oliver O. Howard, who became its first president.

The school is as broad and liberal as the minds of the men by whom it was conceived. It knows no creed, no color, no sex, as, indeed, is proved upon this platform to-night by the fact that, of the valedictorians of the several branches of the Medical Department, one is colored, one white, and one a woman. The hand of welcome has been extended to all

who need, without regard to any questions excepting of fitness, good moral character, sufficient preparatory education and proper age, entitling any candidate to matriculation in the Medical Department.

The several departments of the University were organized as rapidly as circumstances permitted, the Medical Department having held its first session the winter of 1867-'68, with Dr. Silas L. Loomis in the chair of Chemistry, Dr. J. Taber Johnson in the chair of Obstetrics, Dr. S. Reed Ward in the chair of Anatomy, and Dr. Hiram Barber in the chair of Materia Medica and Medical Jurisprudence. Very soon, Dr. Ward having vacated the chair of Anatomy, Dr. A. T. Augusta was (Sept. 21, 1868,) appointed to that chair. Dr. Robert Reyburn having been (June 1, 1868,) appointed to the chair of Surgery; Dr. Barber having vacated the chair of Materia Medica, Dr. Charles B. Purvis was (April 22, '69,) appointed to that chair, Dr. Gideon S. Palmer having been at the same date appointed to the chair of Physiology, while Dr. Phineas A. Strong was (May 4, '69,) appointed to the chair of Principles and Practice.

The first Commencement occurred in March, 1871, when the degree of Doctor of Medicine was conferred upon a class of five. At the Commencement of 1872 the degree was conferred upon a class of ten; in 1873 upon a class of five.

At this period a crisis occurred in the history of the Department. Beginning at its *complete* organization, the occupants of the several chairs had been at least fairly paid, mainly by the donations of persons of wealth who were interested in its success. The financial panic of 1873 had caused the withdrawal, largely, if not entirely, of this means of support, the result of which in the end, was the vacation of several of the chairs. There existing no extraneous support, it became a question of life or death, contingent upon securing the aid of such gentlemen as were in position to give their services for whatever amount could accrue from fixing a scale of fees to be paid by students. The President, General Howard, keenly alive to the interests of which he was the custodian, made *personal* appeals

to members of the profession, asking that they sustain the Department by giving the services outright, if need were, at least for a time, trusting that in the end such numbers of students would be attracted to the school as would at once assure fair, if not wholly adequate, pay to the several chairs, and the permanency of the Department. To this appeal such a number of gentlemen responded as to fill all the vacant chairs. The faculty was reorganized upon a new basis, and a new era inaugurated. At the Commencement of 1874 the degree was conferred upon a class of six; in 1875 upon a class of four; in 1876 upon a class of seven; in 1877 upon a class of eleven; in 1878 upon a class of nine; in 1879 upon a class of ten; in 1880 upon a class of thirteen; in 1881 upon a class of thirteen; in 1882 upon a class of sixteen; in 1883 upon a class of thirty-one; in 1884 upon a class of twenty-three; in 1885 upon a class of twenty-five, and in 1886 upon a class of twenty.

A School of Pharmacy, having been added to the Department in 1879, the degree of Doctor of Pharmacy was, in 1880, conferred upon one person; in 1881 upon one; in 1883 upon seven; in 1884 upon one, and in 1886 upon two.

A School of Dentistry having been added in 1883, the degree of D. D. S. was, in 1884, conferred upon one person; in 1885 upon one, and in 1886 upon two. To-night the Medical Department proper is represented by a class of twenty, and the schools of Pharmacy and Dentistry by a class of six each.

Thus it is seen that, though the Medical Department of Howard University may not be classed among the *great* medical schools of the country, it may be classed among the fairly successful schools, and that, too, in the face of the hatred of some, the contempt of some and the prejudice and misrepresentation of many—a misrepresentation as persistent as untrue, and as biased as persistent; and a prejudice which would not listen to any statement of the facts. There are now in the United States, and scattered in various foreign countries, two hundred and five representatives of the Department, less by a few who have died; and amongst these two hundred and five

persons are some whose skill as physicians and whose success challenges that of the *alumni* of any school of the world. They have taken high rank in the profession, and justly enjoy the respect and confidence of the several communities in which they are located. The *alumni* of no school are in any way or for any reason more entitled to confidence, and none more successful, than many of those who represent Howard University.

Thus, not only our honored President and the Board of Trustees of the University have just ground for congratulation, but all the friends of the school as well; and speaking for my colleagues publicly here to-night, I claim for them that, by their ability as teachers and their untiring devotion to their work amid, at times, the most discouraging of surroundings, they have *earned* the success attained, sustained and supported always by the confidence and aid, to the fullest possible extent, of our President and of the Board of Trustees.

TO THE GRADUATING CLASS:

To you who constitute the graduating class to-night, I have but a few words to say. The degree to be conferred upon you, whether in medicine or pharmacy or dentistry, *ought* to be a guarantee to the public that you, each, are fitted to assume the duties and responsibilities of the practice of your profession; and, so far as the acquirement of the elements of the profession can go, you doubtlessly are so fitted. But there is something more than that—something beyond that—for many persons really *deserve* success in a profession and yet fail to secure it. Most certainly it should be your aim, your firmest, most fixed purpose, to *deserve* to succeed, for it is far nobler to deserve, though you fail, than to succeed without deserving. Do not simply aim to succeed, therefore, but let it be your highest purpose to deserve success.

The field before you, as most, if not all, of you now appreciate, is boundless. Hitherto your purpose has been limited to the acquirement of the principles—the *elements*—of your profession; *now* you are to take upon yourselves the responsi-

bility for the application of the knowledge you have acquired in actual contact with disease, and I assure you that if you would truly acquit yourselves of the weight of responsibility with which you will be charged, you can approach the bedside only with the deepest sense of that responsibility and with an absolute honesty of purpose.

It will not be alone a question of what *you* know but a question of what is known, and therefore you must supplement observation and what is called "experience" by the most industrious and untiring pursuit of the literature of the profession. Each of you is conscious of the fact that he is standing but upon the threshold of his profession. That which has been acquired but fits you for study. Of itself it is nothing. In the presence of the multitude and abstruse nature of the facts—*mysteries* they might very well be named—with which we will be compelled to deal, you can only hope to become wise by recognizing your ignorance. You must constantly bear in mind that these facts are not matters of mere speculative curiosity, to be taken up and studied or to be dismissed as we shall please, but that they are momentous in that they involve questions of life and death. The weal or woe, the happiness or misery of many persons and families may depend upon your fitness to deal with disease. The practice of medicine is no light undertaking. If by the most patient and painstaking study you each shall persuade himself that he has neglected no opportunity to qualify himself to recognize disease and properly treat it, you will at least preserve your own self respect though you fail to secure the confidence of the public.

Despite the occasional sneer of, it may be, a representative of some other learned profession, ours is a noble profession and is worthy of the most ardent devotion. Affording ample scope for the exercise of the intellect, it deals with scenes that tend to elevate the thoughts and to touch the heart. Beware, therefore, that you do not neglect or abuse a stewardship that is so weighty. Medicine, having for its object the good of a common mankind, can know nothing of enmities, the division

of sects or the strife of politics. Disease and pain being the sole conditions of its ministry, "it can be disquieted by no misgivings about the justice or honesty of its client's cause." It dispenses its benefits without stint, asking no questions about rank or country or party or religion, wherever need demands; and, like the quality of mercy, of which it is the hand-maid, it equally blesses him that gives and him that receives, teaching us daily, as it appeals to heart and brain by the most impressive lessons and the most solemn warnings. Surely, then, you cannot embark in a professional career so capable of good if rightly pursued, and so full of peril to yourselves and those who shall commit themselves to your care if administered ignorantly or unfaithfully, without the fullest and truest purpose to avail yourselves of every agency which could render you the more fit and the more capable to deal with disease. Absolute honesty in recognizing your lack of knowledge and skill and in the purpose to acquire both, and that alone, can fit you to encounter the complex problems which lie before you. Here, as everywhere, "Honesty is the best policy." But there is still something other and more than that. Remember that, no matter how successful you shall be, you are but the instruments of a Higher Power. If, to the honest purpose to acquire such knowledge of your profession as you are capable of you shall add a reliance in Him who is the Great Physician as the Great Architect you will have done well, for, believe me, you will be all the better equipped not only to encounter disease but to stand fearlessly in the presence of death.

It remains for me, as the representative of the Faculty, to wish you a most earnest God-speed in the path upon which you now enter. That abundant health and prosperity shall attend each of you is our sincere desire.

VALEDICTORY ADDRESS.

BY ALFRED L. WYKHAM, M. D., OF THE MEDICAL CLASS.

MR. PRESIDENT, DEAN AND FACULTY:

When the exercises opened this evening, ladies and gentlemen, we were before you only so many senior passed students of Howard University Medical College. But our venerable President has once more extended his arm, the degree of M. D. has been conferred, and instead of senior passed students you behold duly qualified medical practitioners, ready to take their places in the profession the most competitive of the age.

Time was when to take a degree from any school of medicine was evidence of much less medical knowledge than is possessed by graduates of to-day.

In those days, the pocket case armed with lancets, like the ancient warrior's quiver full of arrows, formed a highly essential part of the armamentarium of the newly qualified physician.

A fair knowledge of surgery, a collection of formulas, with a knack of adaptation and a gentleman's attainments, were sufficient to insure long years of comfortable success. Yet this success was merited, inasmuch as what there was then of the profession to teach was well taught. At the same time, too, there were those brilliant students who must ever stand out as shining lights through all time, laboring with all the might of their colossal minds, enabling us to-day to benefit by a curriculum of so much greater extent than theirs. In our time, the profession having assumed such gigantic proportions, its subdivisions being so numerous, and the laity being so much better able to tell a quack from a doctor, that when we take our diplomas, even in the midst of most agreeable sur-

roundings—as tasteful decorations, a charming orchestra, and in the presence of, perhaps, an admiring public—we hardly more than openly declare ourselves disciples of Æsculapius, proteges of our patron, time honored Hippocrates.

The physician has been an important factor of every community from time immemorial. A period existed when divinity, medicine and law formed a kind of triple combination, in which divinity was the chief ingredient. Such a combination was necessarily powerful, and its effects on society were baneful. Then another period arrived when, what with the evils of this compound profession, and the growing demands of better days, it was recognized as fit that each profession should be studied in its distinctness.

Ever since the professions have been studied in their distinctness medicine took the lead, which it has kept, and is to-day the chief of the learned professions, if only the fact would be acceded.

In matters concerning public health and domestic happiness, the physician's voice is more and more listened to above others. He expends his mental energy in endeavoring to procure proper methods of hygiene for colleges and their dormitories, which must result in supplying a country with citizens of healthy physique, governed by healthy brains. His suggestions from time to time for the improved hygiene of all public buildings must improve the working capacity of the staff of Government employes, and so benefit the Government, in the first place; in the second place the employes are benefitted, having health to enjoy their well earned emolument with privileges attached.

He has been a long time struggling with a laity that is often not amenable to reason, in order to secure similar advantages for those tenement houses in which are chiefly found the sons of toil.

His efforts in this direction have not up to now met with the success they merit; but that notice has been taken of his voice in some quarters is indicative of what possible changes may come about in the near future. When the fact that is so

old to the medical profession shall have dawned on the people, that these worse forms of tenement houses are the dens of crime and all the evil side of humanity, from which are drafted daily the prison and penitentiary supplies, and also the cradle and hot bed of all dread diseases, which may penetrate excellent hygienic surroundings of a remote homestead, then will this vast subject receive its merited consideration.

Here, too, you see the Government will benefit, but the people will benefit more, for with improved surroundings go **hand in hand an improved moral standard.**

He advises the millionaire as to the best methods of warming his palatial parlors, and of rendering healthy his too richly draped bed room.

You find him in the slaughter house, inspecting the meat of animals killed for public consumption. He says which is fit for human food and which is not.

In the matter of dress reform he also makes his efforts for the good of mankind. But in this particular, although the laity see very well the wisdom in the improvements he would make in dress, they blindfold their eyes and take their own course. If he believe in planes and curves, they believe in prominences, and will have them. If he recommend silk stockings and common-sense shoes, they wear the silk stockings but get a shoe with a French heel.

Still, it is gratifying to note that in some very essential particulars his voice has been heard, which may be appreciated as an expression of the great revolution that must come about at no distant date in this branch of physiological hygiene.

So that you see, and it is quite self-evident, that the part the physician plays in the world is to maintain and so prolong life, and render that life enjoyable; for it is well to remember that without health wealth cannot be acquired, and wealth being acquired without health it cannot be enjoyed.

But the world moves rapidly just now, it has not time to take a retrospect. When that time arrives, when the world's tricksters shall have been satiated with the foul intrigues of courts and the blood and thunder of the battle field, it will be

willing to allow that others have contributed to the welfare of humanity than wily diplomats or heroes of horrid war.

Further, it will admit that those who tend to render mankind happiest must necessarily occupy the highest place in history. It is then that places in public buildings and public squares of cities will be reserved for representatives of our profession, and other humane persons. People will go to see statues of Harvey and Hunter and Jenner; of Wm. Wilberforce, Geo. Peabody, Robert Raikes and Harriet Beecher Stowe.

But where the physician appears to best advantage is in the position of the family medical adviser. Here he shines. The situation is almost divine. He is the repository of all that is sacred of that family who, in their turn, look up to him with implicit confidence. His opinions and advice and presence are demanded in times that might be called epochs—in birth, in marriage, in sickness and in death.

When, as most often happens, he finds himself contending face to face with disease in its gravest form at the bedside of one who wavers between life and the grave, he becomes resplendent, the rays from this brilliancy extending to every member of the profession.

It is here that he is without doubt the chief of the learned professions.

It is for him to say when to allow the man of the church to enter or whether he be required at all. It is for him to know when to summon the man of law, and thereby spare survivors the horrors of scuffling for intestate effects.

In no other department of life has any single individual so much confidence reposed in him. He is consequently exposed to the greatest temptations, and as members of this profession we may glory in what is a proud fact that the instances in which these trusts have been prostituted are, comparatively, very, very few and far between.

We therefore fully realize that in this formal severance of our immediate connection from those in whose hands our training had been intrusted, and formal introduction by them

to a public that is sometimes indulgent and at all times capricious, that our responsibilities are manifold; for not only have we to carve the way to our own success, and support all that has been handed down to us of honor and dignity in this ancient profession, but we have just as sacred a duty to discharge—we must contribute to the fame of our *Alma Mater*.

In receiving our diplomas to-night, classmates, we receive the reward that sweetens that labor that we had necessarily to expend in order to complete the curriculum.

We breathe freely now. What we had been aiming at for years has been placed within our grasp to-night.

It remains for us to separate for our respective destinations; and as it exists in every student's breast, in a greater or less degree (according to the development of his finer senses) that indescribable vacant feeling when the time comes to part, to say farewell, I know it exists in ours. Of course there are reasons proper to each. Perhaps firm friendships formed in class; perhaps friendships formed as the result of frequent contact under the same roof; perhaps not more than admiration for some with whom we are not friendly, because mind must bow to mind. But there is also one reason common to all; I mean the associations of our *Alma Mater*. There must ever be well preserved pictures on our memories of the College and its many familiar scenes. It will be hard to forget the dispensary, where we learnt the difference between calomel and jalap, and the dispensary clinics, that first gave us insight into the study of diseases, how to write prescriptions, how to deal with patients, and even, when the lesson was required, how to deport ourselves in the presence of the subjects of disease. And with these recollections will be intimately associated the jolly and lively face of our junior instructor of the clinic room, for Dr. Shadd is always affable and obliging to students.

Impressions of our lecture room must be indelible, not only on account of its tiers of hard seats, but because of the many valuable and scientific truths imparted to us from its desk.

From this desk we have been carried through all the important branches of medicine as it is taught to-day, commencing with the protoplasm and ending with the death of the body. The study of anatomy which was, is, and must always be the groundwork of every medical curriculum, has been so presented to us in the lecture course as to cause us to be able to attest the fact.

This study, that is generally considered dry, and as such has failed in the hands of many teachers, as to the manner of imparting it successfully—that is, not only furnishing the student with hard facts in detail, but of developing in him a taste for the study—is successfully accomplished by our Anatomist in one of two ways: either that the student develops admiration for the study for its own sake, or from a dreadful anxiety to meet the requirements. And all this is effected with the least apparent possible effort on the part of the lecturer, but in a style coldly probing; and at times when, as though he himself might feel that it was right to relieve the tension, he would throw out some of his witty sayings, with the same coolness, which always added to their effect. It would appear then that the Howard University Medical College is quietly taking a place as a School of Anatomy—a very enviable place among medical schools.

From the same desk we have had the structure of organs and their functions in relation to health; these lectures, always abounding in those splendid hints only to be acquired through years of study and experience. Then comes the chemist, with his elements and weights and measures, group reagents and test tubes, retorts and spirit lamps, blow pipes and crucibles, separating all tissues and secretions into their ultimate particles, furnishing us knowledge of physiological and pathological conditions.

Then, taking the form of a parlor social, would be our lectures on materia medica and therapeutics, especially the quiz night. What with the very visible character of this lecturer, his very diffuse literary knowledge, which, perhaps, has been intensified by contact with manners and customs of

foreign countries, he is decidedly able to render his course of lectures highly interesting, at the same time claiming the fixed attention of students, while he impresses the importance of this branch of medicine. Then we have those clinics which are really sublime to the senior student, because they are best appreciated at this stage of his career. It is impressing to see a group of eager, anxious students at a medical clinical lecture, so quiet that the fall of a tiniest pin might be heard, whose central figure, at once dignified, grave and learned, propounds with the ease and grace common to him the broad truths and nice points involved in the principles and practice of medicine.

At our surgical clinic we have for its central figure an embodiment of years and experience, who has arrived at that stage in the career of the surgeon who is favored with long life, when promptly he can decide as to whether or not he must operate. He is at once heroic and conservative. His positive teachings must be admired. His familiar sayings, his cordial address and constant anxiety that the student should thoroughly seize upon his instructions, must ever render him popular in the chair of surgery.

Then, as the species must be propagated, it has been recognized in these latter days as an important subject of the syllabus of medical schools, being reduced to almost mathematical precision. In our school we have been carried through all its intricacies, coming out with a living unit to be added to this vast sea of troubles known as the human population. On our passage through we have been required to stop at several points—perhaps well called landmarks of the study—and here our professor of obstetrics would take care that the knowledge of these important points, so necessary in order to obtain success in practice, were thoroughly grasped. Here he is practical and profound; nor are times wanting when moral sentiment took a lofty flight, and the gravity of the situation of the obstetrician was graphically portrayed.

Recollections of associations such as these cannot fade, but will afford pleasurable moments in the future. We cannot all succeed in our schemes of life; we will not all become emi-

nent ; but this much is open to every one and to all, we can be useful. And if we bear in mind what is a fact, that it is the busy, useful, mediocre practitioner who has the power to accept or reject the advances of the brilliant members of the profession, those of us who find ourselves average physicians, after years of hard struggles, can very well afford to admire heartily the few who have scored high marks, if our only reason be a common *Alma Mater*.

To return thanks to you, the Dean and Faculty of Howard University Medical College, for having brought us to this successful issue, is a task that we cannot very well do justice to. It is quite as impossible for us to be able to know how much to thank you for your years of painstaking labors in fitting us for professional life as it is for a son at his twenty-first birthday party to repay his parents for their care of him up to that time in a set after-dinner speech. But we have been able to recognize all through our curriculum your untiring efforts to place the student in a position favorable to his success in after life and to be able to keep pace with the enormous competition that awaits him—each professor employing methods that to his mind would as nearly as possible meet this end. We therefore thank you sincerely for the great interest exercised in our welfare as students, and in our future as practitioners. For the rest, time must be the great factor in determining the sum of our gratitude. We can only form a just estimate of how much we owe you as we grow older in the profession, when we shall have seen, from time to time, something of the complex phases that we must meet in practice, and find ourselves in situations that compel us vividly to recall particular instructions on particular points, pursuing those steps so carefully and beautifully laid down by you, regarding the results with that pleasure that must fill the heart of the successful physician. Only then can we justly give you credit for your great work by shedding lustre on your heads and adding to the fame of our *Alma Mater*. The executive officers of the Faculty have our hearty thanks for the care and attention of our interests, and earnest wish for their long continuance in connection with

the school. This school of medicine, which is destined to exert a tremendous influence in the world, especially on this western half, evolved, among other things, from the chaos that resulted from the most horrible of internecine wars, and which has so steadily gained renown that it is to-day surrounded on all sides by silly folk struck dumb, their envious teeth carping at her giant strides, is an evidence of good management, of great executive ability. This portion of the *ensemble* of any faculty of any educational organization does not, as a rule, come very prominently into view. Unless good and careful observations are made and some knowledge of the internal affairs of the institution be acquired even students are apt to think lightly of the great responsibilities of a faculty, and this, only, when they stop to think. Outsiders never stop to think at all, which is a fact often manifested in their ugly clamor for the removal of men from certain connections, whose only faults were inherent desire to discharge their duties efficiently so that posterity should benefit, but whose ways and means of arriving at such ends were not in keeping with popular fancy.

Inasmuch, however, as we know the value of every member of our faculty, in that each one endeavors strenuously to place the school in prominence and to maintain it there, we are sincere when we say that we wish your connection with it to grow stronger as Howard grows more famous, so that you have the great satisfaction of seeing the finishing touches added to a structure towards the rearing of which you have contributed so much. It is the mission of our *Alma Mater* to illumine what in us is dark—what is low to raise and support. Then let her educate, and educate, and educate. In due time this education, this “useless effort,” as it was called by some of the leading minds of this country not so long since, to rectify the mistakes of by-gone days, will develop into thought. Thoughts collected and fermented will at a future date develop into action, because action is the safety valve of thought. Action will make itself felt. All actions well directed must command attention, whether it be in the form of combined wealth, a most important element in every successful

enterprise; whether it be in the form of combined literary efforts through which grievances may be set forth and justice sued for, or whether it be evinced in that high-toned moral courage that supports a man when jeopardizing every life drop in defence of principles, his fireside and his household gods.

This attention, this hearkening, will be unto the voice of Howard graduates, for every university of a country contributes its quota of men and minds to the affairs of that country. Howard cannot be an exception. These voices will enter, as they ought, largely into the shaping the affairs and destinies of a country that floats in proud boast, *Libertas* and the stars and stripes—emblems of the purity, religion, bravery and freedom that pervade her homes far and wide.

When that time shall have come, when the mist of early dawn shall have paled before the pure beams of a rising sun, when from far-off spirit land brave Howard shall view with self-satisfied air the realization of his earthly dreams, then let another statue of liberty be placed on the gulf, one on the Pacific coast, one on her Northern confines; so that she be literally surrounded with statues of Liberty, each statue, flambeau in hand and high above her head, proclaiming to the world from every side, "America has solved the problem of the rights of man."

VALEDICTORY ADDRESS.

BY MURDOCH C. SMITH, D. D. S., OF THE DENTAL CLASS.

LADIES, GENTLEMEN, ESTEEMED PROFESSORS
AND FELLOW STUDENTS :

The pleasant duty of addressing you this evening in behalf of the Dental Department of this University, has been given to one who is wholly unable to do justice to the cause he is here to represent.

I fully appreciate the honor that has been conferred upon me in the election to this position, but for the advancement of the Art of Dentistry I would have preferred that it should have fallen on some one better fitted to lay before you the aims and objects of the Dental Department of Howard University.

Four years ago it was deemed advisable to start a Dental Department in connection with this institution, and as fruits of that adventure, we find a school in perfect running order, with a goodly number of students in attendance.

The graduating class consists of students who come from the South, East, North and West, both Germany and Canada contributing of their sons to make up the number. If in four years students can be induced to come here from so many climes, what may we not reasonably expect in the near future when the opportunities afforded by this University are better known throughout the world?

An institution conceived by great men and started for a noble cause, she threw her doors open to the whole world, made no distinction between nations, race or sex. Noble Alma Mater; long may she continue to prosper in her glorious work.

Washington is a city which ranks among the great cities of

America. Proudly may she boast of her many advantages. Endowed by nature with a mild climate and beautiful scenery, built on the banks of the historical and picturesque Potomac, overlooked by the hills of Old Virginia and the heights of Arlington, which are endeared to the whole Nation. Can there be a more hallowed spot on earth than where lie the Nation's dead?

Her collections of art, of science, of natural history; her libraries, her parks, her Medical Museum, her botanical gardens, hospitals and schools, are worthy the boast of many an older city. What more can a student desire in the way of surroundings than are found in this favored District? Its future is inconceivable; it is destined to remain a mighty city, not subject to the caprices of commerce or the will of a few railroad magnates, but the Capital of a great and growing Nation, whose prosperity goes hand in hand with that of this ever progressive Nation. He who would predict a downfall for Washington must predict the same for this the greatest Republic the world has ever seen.

The art of dentistry is fast taking its place as a specialty of medicine. People are no longer willing to trust the care of the delicate organs of the mouth to the uneducated mechanic, whose greatest ambition is to extract the teeth that nature intended should be used to masticate our food and give to the face its true expression.

Dentistry might almost be said to be an American outgrowth of the present century. Our forefathers who first came to this country, subsisted upon the coarsest diets of a new country, had little need of the dentist; but as time passed, the ever active American found he was consuming too much time in eating his meals, and that some change was necessary, and as the country advanced more luxuries were placed upon his table. He soon found himself in the habit of eating only of soft food and swallowing that whole, altogether ignoring that nature meant his teeth should be used to keep them in a state of preservation. As generations followed the teeth became poorer, it was found necessary that something should be done

to preserve the natural denture. The professional man, with all his skill and knowledge, looked on in disdain, as much as to say that it would be below his dignity to do such work as excavating and filling a tooth; as for mechanical work, it was altogether below his position in life, and he considered it preposterous that he should be expected to do such a thing as make an artificial denture, while the mechanic looking upon it from a financial standpoint, was soon ready with all manner of contrivances to restore nature's losses. Many entered the field from a motive purely mercenary, advertised their goods for sale and the price expected to be paid. This left the people to suppose the goods were all alike, and that the purchaser was entitled to buy in the cheapest market, not thinking that one should be paid for his ability and skill. Such a condition of affairs is fast passing away, and the Dental practitioners are being placed on a better footing.

Within the past few years the *materia medica* has made a complete change, among which might be mentioned the use of nitrous oxide and cocaine, which have converted the horrors of the operating room into something hardly to be dreaded.

The treatment of diseased teeth has made a marked advance. Formerly if a nerve became troublesome, from exposure or otherwise, the tooth was sacrificed to get rid of the unruly member. Now it is no longer always necessary to thus rid one's self. By the application of a little soothing lotion until the inflammation has subsided and nature has assumed control, then by the aid of a non-conducting, non-irritating substance laid over the exposed pulp to protect it from further irritation, nature will soon assert herself to repair the loss.

To be a successful dentist requires a person of many resources. He should be familiar with anatomy, surgery, physiology, *materia medica*, histology, therapeutics, metallurgy, electricity, toxicology, and, lastly, but not least, chemistry, for the oral cavity is one of the most complicated chemical laboratories of complicated nature. He should be decided and firm if a surgical operation is necessary; he should be careful and honest, advise his patient from his best judgment, do his

work thoroughly and as quickly as possible. He should always be cheerful, and have a neat appearance. If at the operating chair, first seek to win the confidence of his patients, give them to understand that he will not inflict upon them more pain than is necessary. His instruments should be sharp, and for each movement of an instrument a definite end in view. Summing it up, he should be a professional gentleman.

The lectures we have listened to this winter have been well fitted to our several needs. It is quite evident our professors have studied well our several wants and administered accordingly. If we are as punctual in our practice as our professors have been in their lectures, we shall become noted for punctuality at least. Through storm and mud, cold and ice, our professors have been punctual at their post, always ready with a kind word of advice or a friendly word of assistance. While our lectures have been deep and thorough, they have not been lacking in the minor matters that are of so much importance to the young graduate about to enter upon the duties of his chosen profession.

The student coming to Howard University a stranger will find many advantages not to be found elsewhere. If he has his whole time for study, while not engaged in college work he can find a rich treat in the many libraries, museums and public resorts with which this city abounds.

As we are now about to leave Howard University, and many of us to leave Washington, let us say a few kind words to those of our friends who have made our stay here so pleasant and profitable. We will ever carry with us the remembrance of our sojourn here, and I trust look back upon the time spent with pride and pleasure. The citizens received us kindly and treated us well. Our professors have taken a deep interest in us and tried by word and deed to encourage us along, for which they have our heartfelt thanks.

And now, my fellow-students, as we are about to separate to go to our several homes, let us take with us the best wishes for our Alma Mater; let us ever strive to honor the institution

that this day honors us in giving to us that by which we may be recognized among professional men, and that by which the world has a guarantee that we are not quacks or charlatans. This institution honors us in heralding to the world that we are her offspring. Let us ever strive to maintain for her the high standing that she has already attained; may she prosper in the future as she has in the past, thereby handing down to posterity the name of her founder as a great and good man.

VALEDICTORY ADDRESS.

BY MARY ELLIS MORRISON, M. D. PHAR. D., OF THE PHARMACEUTICAL CLASS.

GENTLEMEN OF THE FACULTY, FELLOW STUDENTS,
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN :

It devolves upon me to present to you the greetings of the Class in Pharmacy and to speak those parting words which, according to an ancient and honored custom, are fittingly uttered in the presence of those interested friends, who have been at once our support and our inspiration, who have assembled to witness the crowning of our efforts, to hear of those excellent things we have accomplished, and share with us these academical honors; for who will say whether that heart which swells with the greatest pride and satisfaction on this occasion be on the platform or in the audience? Yet it seems to me that a commencement which has for its object the bestowal of honorable degrees on the students of pharmacy hand in hand with the students of medicine is fraught with a deep and more than ordinary significance. It speaks to our minds facts of more universal importance, much more than the accomplishment of individual attainments. The patronage and co-advancement of medicine with pharmacy is but the expression of the intellectual development of the human race, the progression or retrogression of which has manifested itself more forcibly in the healing art than in anything else, except religion. As at one time all learning was confined to the monks, so it was at one time confined to Arabian physicians.

The healing art, which began in fetichism, where every idle stone possessed its magic power and every amulet wrought its peculiar charm, is to-day represented by its modern drug-store

with a thousand medicaments, each having its invariable and well defined therapeutic power, an art which for one thousand five hundred years fostered the delusions of the shrine cure, where the sick resorted to the temples of Æsculapius to crave the assistance of and appease an angry God; to whom every sickness was attributed and from whom every epidemic and plague was thought to emanate. Benighted as they, later on crowds repaired to the shrines of the saints, as they did to the temples, adopted another kind of fetich called the relics of the saints, but, no better than those of tropical Africa. Through these beliefs lunatics were supposed to be possessed of devils; did a spring discharge water with carbonic gas, it was agitated by an angel; if a person descended into a pit and was suffocated with mephitic air, there was a demon; if an explosion occurred in some mine, it was a conflict of malignant spirits; wonderful cures were said to be performed by the relics and bones of martyrs; a man with sore eyes must wink at Saint Clara, but if it be an inflammation elsewhere he must supplicate Saint Anthony, while an ague demanded no less than Pernal.

Again, amulets and charms were conceived to derive their power from an indwelling spirit. A soul was supposed to permeate the universe, heavenly bodies controlled by an inherent intelligent principle; a *man* was a partial soul, like the spirit of a flame; all other things, animate or inanimate—brutes, stones, plants, rivers, mountains, cascades and grottoes—had each an individual spirit.

Strange occurrences corroborated these facts; sealed vessels were burst open, vapors condensed into liquids; brilliant precipitates formed from colorless liquids; explosions took place spontaneously; if a laborer descended into a well and was struck by an unseen hand, if a lamp lowered burned with a lurid flame and was suddenly extinguished, there was a spiritual agency.

The gases when discovered were regarded as spirits—received the name of ghost or gas. The air had its sylphs, the earth its gnomes, fire its salamanders, water its undines, but the black art, or the occult science, paved the way to that most

wonderful of all delusions, alchemy, with its essences and quintessences, magical mirrors, perpetual lamps, transmutation of the baser metals into gold, which should produce that universal panacea, the elixir vitae, which should cure all disease and prolong life forever. For already had some liquids proved to fortify the memory, some destroy, some impart dullness, others heighten the spirit, and those most highly prized by all, able to secure the return of love.

This laid the foundation of chemistry, and on the application of these ideas lay the principle that it was possible to relieve disease of the human body by material means.

As the science advanced it gradually threw off its fetichism, the spiritual receding into insignificance, the material coming prominently forward, it became evident that the influence of substances on the constitution of man is altogether of a material kind. No need of necromancers or incantations, apothecaries no longer repeated prayers over drugs to give a divine afflatus. No value in amulets or charms. The vocation of the priest and physician were separated; for the gods and saints were substituted impersonal nature—our *materia medica*. Colleges were founded, medicine was laid upon the solid foundation of anatomy, physiology and pharmacy. The occupation of pharmacy became so important and lucrative that many pursued it as an occupation, and not a few as a liberal science. One, than whom none ever exerted a greater influence over mankind, kept an apothecary shop in Athens. Aristotle, who sold drugs over the counter, was Aristotle the philosopher, whose dictum was final with the school men of the middle ages.

Astronomy shook off her errors, proved that we are governed by an invariable law, we are supported and nourished by a star a million of miles distant, the source, direct or indirect, of every terrestrial movement; that man is not independent of the forces that rule the world. By the light of modern physiology we find even the heart of man constructed on the simple principles of hydraulics; the eye an optical instrument; the ear adapted to the characteristics of sound, and that we even breathe on

physical principles. We have also discovered that every land contains those material agents which produce an unvarying and selective action upon certain tissues of the human body.

The Government of every enlightened nation sanctions the official list of drugs by the force of law, the dispensers of which are restricted by certain regulations.

The text books of pharmacy, different from those of other branches of science, lay down rules for even the deportment and morals of its professionals. They "must acquire a uniformly cheerful temper, their acquaintance must be select; neatness, order, cleanliness is required to be practiced constantly; their deportment must be that of a gentleman; every customer must be treated with the same deference; no druggist be allowed to extol an article beyond its merits to advance his pecuniary interest; they must have a liberal education, a knowledge of the elements of the Latin language, a taste for the natural and physical sciences, especially of botany and chemistry; his faculties of observation and reflection must have been previously awakened; he must be a person who brings to the pursuit a desire and determination to master it," then may he enter upon the study of pharmacy.

As a professional he must not only know the physical and chemical properties of the agent which has a therapeutic value, but know what that value is—the effects of heat, light, moisture, on each drug; the agents for extracting their virtues, the philosophy of those methods, the philosophy upon which the instruments he uses are constructed, the discovery of which gave to science its Newton, Kepler, Laplace. He must be expert in his manipulations, correct in his methods, skillful with his spatula, spry with his pestle, accurate as the balances on his counter, always keeping his equilibrium, able to detect every deleterious substance or poison, and never himself become contaminated; be able to read writing as well as any Philadelphia lawyer, felicitous in his mode of address, discriminating in his charges, charitable where there is a necessity, no respecter of persons, yet all respectful, a model in his behavior, highly moral, a gentleman and a nobleman. I have every

reason to believe the class of 1887 to be representative pharmacists. Having been associated with them in studies, at lectures, in dispensary practice, in their ministration upon the sick many times, in a large hospital in this city, I feel they promise to fulfill every requirement, and to feel that responsibility which every druggist must feel who is often called upon to rectify an hastily written and dangerous prescription, who hands over the counter the drug fraught with the issues of life and death.

And now, honorable and honored Faculty, a large share of credit is due you. You have been our guiding star, our inspiration. You have been to us, at times, the embodiment of the knowledge you have expounded. We are, to a certain extent, what you have wrought, following your ideas, hanging on your words, bending over your shoulders, seated at your feet, we have caught your spirit—that shall ever remain a part of us. But now we must leave you. Is it not seemly that we should express those tender regrets which we can but naturally feel at parting, and that we should be constrained to asseverate, that though future years may bring before you students of more advanced capabilities, commensurate with the progress of the age, you will never find a class more appreciative of your patient endeavors.

Dear classmates: we shall recite and listen and labor together no more. Our hearts are beating with conflicting emotions, full of hope and courage and self-reliance. We are now full-fledged, anxious to try our wings, also full of tender recollections, a little conscious pride, and no little satisfaction.

Some mention of the honor you have bestowed is due you at my hands, yet it is difficult to express what I feel, and tomorrow my words will have been forgotten; yet in the future annals of the progress of the liberality and courage of the nineteenth century will be recorded the first testimony of its kind which was rendered to woman was made by the class of 1887.

Good luck go with you, and may tender memories abide with you forever.

And now my Alma Mater, foster mother, whose mantle is so

large, whose principles are so broad, who has made it possible for me, even me, to pay this public tribute, may your light shine brighter in the twentieth century. May it never be extinguished—never.

And now, ladies and gentlemen, these farewells upon the platform are but the introduction to the public. Our associations begin. Who but our friends must launch us upon this unknown and untried sea. At this happy moment I see interest in your faces, smiles on your lips, a kindly beam of encouragement in your eyes. But the next time we meet that same countenance may be heavy, eyes sad, lips trembling. Our intercourse may be by proxy, a little scrap of paper will be handed us with the injunction for the druggist to hurry. At that serious time one of us may be there; if so, earnest, concerned, responsible. No compliments of the day, but, by and by, some one will drop in to chat, talk it over with the druggist, and between him and you will be struck a sympathetic chord. The beloved patient is well, all through the mighty instrumentality of that wonderful little material agent called a medicine, and all is well that ends well, and so it is we say farewell.

Honorable trustees, gentlemen of the Faculty, classmates, ladies and gentlemen, farewell.



